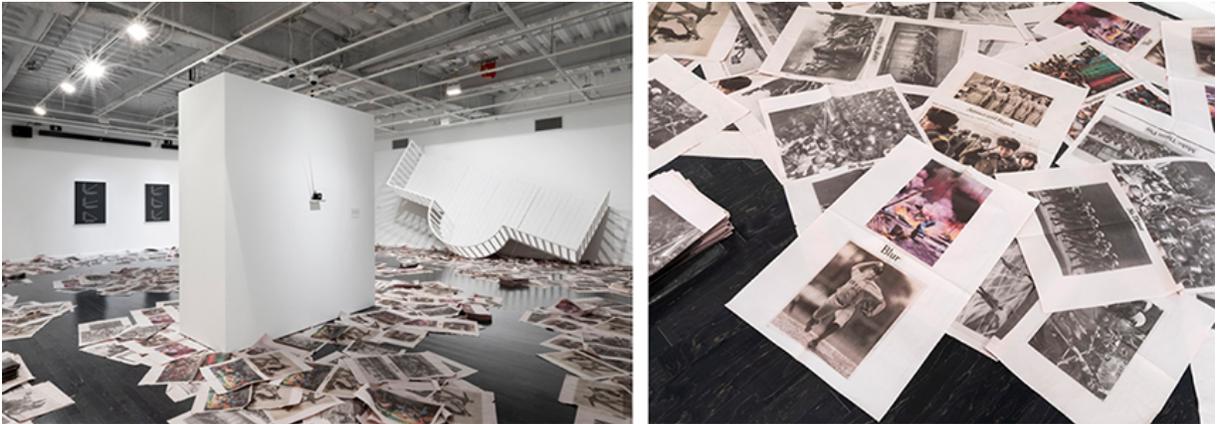


Artillery Magazine  
Gallery Rounds  
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York Chang  
*The Signal and the Noise*  
April 13 – July 20, 2019  
Vincent Prince Art Museum

By Jody Zellen



Littered with newsprint—though not from an actual newspaper, but instead, oversized diptychs (34 x 21 inches) printed with news photographs and headlines drawn from *The New York Times*—the gallery floor in York Chang’s installation *The Signal and the Noise* (all works 2019) is a confounding flood of information. In mirroring the title Nate Silver’s 2012 book, Chang’s installation echoes the defining problem of the information age: In a world drowning in data, how does one distinguish a coherent—and accurate—narrative?

Each diptych juxtaposes two images taken from the print edition of *The New York Times* and a single phrase also culled from the paper that directs the interpretation of both images. For example, in one piece, the word “Blur” is centered between a color photograph of a boy surrounded by fiery objects and a sepia toned black and white image of a Yankees pitcher in mid delivery.

The caption “Make them Pay” interpolates two images of seated crowds: One, an exterior, depicts a group of men huddled on the ground, waiting. The other shows men and women at what could be construed as cultural gathering. In another work the word “Spectator” separates color photographs, one of a celebrating crowd, the other of refugees climbing into a boat. In each, Chang’s ambiguous but poignant text influences the reading of both images.

Set within this organized clutter, pathways lead through the gallery to different works. *Freefall*, a collapsed balcony, cascades from the wall onto the floor. As this architectural element cannot be stood on or entered, it becomes a symbol of uselessness and precarity. On the back wall, three prints entitled *Future Perfect False Prophet* display simple charts that graph generic and incongruous notions like “How often a certain thing happens” vs “How often some other thing happens.” These phrases create a dialectic that permeates the installation as Chang asks viewers to think about the relationship between everything. This is most obvious in the sound work, *Shortwave* where two opposing radio transmissions are broadcast on the same channel, becoming a collage of alternating voices and opinions.

Chang's constructs dualities. He carefully curates pairings that challenge and question how information is received and consumed. Missing, however, is any reference to digital communication, fake news and social media. The installation harkens back to analogue times —when shortwave radio and printed news were the primary sources of information. With this work, Chang is suggesting we step back, look and listen to that which physically surrounds us and see it in a new way.

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